

CTA-NW Recommended Guidelines for HB 1694

HB 1694 Language

(3) To improve the service experienced by persons with special transportation needs, the council shall develop statewide guidelines for customer complaints processes so that information about policies regarding the complaint process is available consistently and consumers are appropriately educated about available options. To be eligible for funding on or after January 1, 2008, organizations applying for state Paratransit/special needs grants as described in section 226(10), chapter 370, Laws of 2006 must implement a process following the guidelines established by the council.

Use of the term Comment Process

CTA-NW has elected to use the term comment process as interchangeable with the customer complaint process reference in HB 1694. Agencies frequently receive commendations as well as complaints. We feel it is important to acknowledge and handle both through the same process.

Outcome

Agencies will be provided with state-wide guidelines to be utilized in their customer comment process. The guidelines are designed to assure that:

- Customers feel free to make comments without fear of retribution at any level of the agency's operations.
- All agencies have a clear and easily understood comment process in place.
- Information about the comment process is readily available and provided to customers.
- Customers understand that all comments are valued and welcomed.

Guidelines Suggestions

1. Agencies will have a process in place to educate customers on how to make service comments.
 - a. At a minimum that process will include
 - i. Mechanisms for educating new users on the comment process either via the phone and/or distribution of written materials following the customer's first request for service and/or once the customer is screened for service eligibility.
 - b. Additional communication options include
 - i. Placing easily located information on the comment process on the agency's web site and/or in a Rider's Guide.
 - ii. Agency staff participation in community outreach and educational opportunities/events
2. Agencies will have a process which gives customers easy and accessible means to make service comments.

- a. At a minimum the process will allow for comment to be accepted by:
 - i. Phone
 - ii. Written correspondence
 - iii. Agencies will ensure drivers can provide a phone number and/or information for filing complaints
 - b. Agencies will be encouraged to develop additional means of soliciting comments such as:
 - i. providing self – addressed comment cards on vehicles for customer use
 - ii. periodically conducting user surveys
 - iii. agency staff participation in community outreach and educational opportunities/events
3. Agencies will have a process for reviewing, recording, and when appropriate taking corrective action on comments
- a. At a minimum agencies will
 - i. have a mechanism for tracking comments
 - ii. have a documented complaint investigation process
 - iii. assure staff are educated and trained on the investigation process
 - iv. ensure appropriate corrective action is taken as warranted by the comment
4. Agencies will have a process for assuring all customers receive a response and/or acknowledgement of their comment.
- a. At a minimum an agency's process will
 - i. assure that all comments are acknowledged
 - ii. factor in the nature of the comment and the wishes of the customer in guiding the level of response
 - iii. allow for responses by phone and/or written communications
5. Agencies will develop an easily accessible appeal process for customers that are unsatisfied with the outcome of their service comment.
- a. At a minimum agencies will
 - i. assure that information distributed regarding the comment process references a formal appeals process
 - ii. assure customers who have expressed a dissatisfaction of the outcome of their comment are provided information on the formal appeal process